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ABSTRACT

Assuming that neighborhood newspapers and neighborhood leaders are among the most important influences on neighborhood residents' issue agendas and definitions of issues, a study examined some of these influences by interviewing a random sample of 239 residents of a low income, urban neighborhood in Minneapolis. In addition, a purposive sample of 52 leaders of neighborhood organizations who had an interest in one or more of four issues was interviewed. Residents and leaders were asked to identify the neighborhood's most important problems or issues. Among the issues of greatest concern were crime, housing, physical appearance of the neighborhood, economic development, and chemical dependency of many residents. The order of emphasis by neighborhood residents varied, however, by education. The agenda of the leaders as a group correlated most highly with the agenda of the most educated. When definitions of the issues were examined in detail, the relative emphases by the neighborhood press bore comparatively much less relationship to the emphases by neighborhood residents. It was concluded that organization leaders were more influential in defining issues than the neighborhood press, and that leaders exerted the most influence when public attention to issues and knowledge about them were low. References and data tables are appended. (HOD)

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPERS AND NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS:
INFLUENCES ON AGENDA SETTING AND DEFINITIONS OF ISSUES

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPERS AND NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS:
INFLUENCES ON AGENDA SETTING AND DEFINITIONS OF ISSUES

Agenda setting research has focused on the relationships between the agenda of issues emphasized by the press and the roster of issues in the mind of the public. Most agenda setting research, however, ignores the role of community leaders in shaping opinion and defining issues, independent of the press, and for the press itself. Nor does it take into account the kinds of variables which may influence 1) the issues to which they are oriented and 2) whether or not individuals pay attention to issues.

The purpose of this paper is to examine some of these influences on individuals' agendas of neighborhood issues and to compare the role of neighborhood newspapers with that of neighborhood leaders in forming agendas of neighborhood residents and in defining issues. The intent of the paper also is to examine potential differences in agendas of various segments of a neighborhood, based on differences in level of education. This is because education may be a prominent influence on individuals' agendas and because education may shape access to information, understanding of issues, and access to leadership roles in community affairs.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND AGENDA SETTING

Little research has illuminated the influence of individual-level variables on presence of issues in agendas. In particular, little research has scrutinized the effect of education on agenda setting. Since agendas are measures of awareness knowledge, the "knowledge gap" literature is relevant for understanding the influence of education on agendas.

Under certain conditions persons with lower levels of education have shown lower knowledge levels than those with higher education, leading to a widened knowledge gap in the population based on differentials in education or other indicators of socioeconomic status (see Gaziano, 1983-a).¹

Agenda setting may be a contingent condition for knowledge gaps to occur (McCombs, 1976; Gaziano, 1976). Some researchers (e.g., Benton and Frazier, 1976) have studied agenda setting in the context of depth knowledge. The agenda setting concept applies only to awareness knowledge, according to Winter (1981). Eyal (1981:230) has pointed out that some researchers fall into "the trap of including information acquisition and knowledge-gain processes under the rubric of agenda setting."

Agenda setting is in the realm of "acquaintance with," as opposed to "knowledge about" (Winter; Park, 1940). The knowledge gap literature encompasses both awareness knowledge and detailed knowledge (Gaziano, 1983-a). In this paper agenda setting will be considered theoretically as a contingent condition for gaps in both types of knowledge to occur.

Researchers frequently find that the more educated are interested in more topics than the less educated (Bogart, 1981). MacKuen and Coombs (1981) found that individuals with the most education have issue agendas more similar to the mass media's agendas than do the less educated. These findings suggest the idea of an "agenda gap," based on differences in education.

Other characteristics besides education play a role in predicting wide or narrow knowledge gaps, including interest in topics (MacKuen and Coombs; Genova and Greenberg, 1979), personal experience,² and participation in organizations. However, differentials in these characteristics can be related to differentials in education (Gaziano, 1983-b, 1983-c). The influence of such characteristics on agendas and how agendas are acquired should be studied.

Further, since there may be variation in agendas related to education, it seems important to look at variation in definitions of issues related to education. Definitions of issues are the way that people perceive issues, the discriminations they make among differing aspects of issues and the differences in the stress they place on these various issue aspects. These differences may be related to differences in education or other characteristics linked to education.

THE PROCESS BY WHICH ISSUES GET ON THE PUBLIC'S AGENDA

Study of these kinds of characteristics would help to illuminate the problem of how and why particular issues get on the public agenda and others do not. Weaver (1982:12) has stated that this "is a more important question than the relative ranking of those issues" (also see: Nord, 1981).

Another approach which would shed light on the agenda setting process is to contrast the relative influence of individual leadership roles and mass media on the public's awareness of issues and definitions of issues. The influence of leaders and media can vary also because of differences in individuals' education. This occurs partly because of differentials in their access to these information sources (Gaziano, 1983-b, 1983-c).

Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller (1980:45) have proposed a model of "'audience effects' which assumes that media coverage interacts with the audience's pre-existing sensitivities to produce changes in issue concerns." Lang and Lang (1983) argue that the mass media have the most influence when the public has no other sources of information about events, policy makers, or issues. They propose the concept of agenda building. This approach treats media as a necessary but insufficient condition in the issue development process (Weaver, 1982).

Community leaders can be viewed as an alternative information source. Community leaders can set or direct the agenda of the press, and their actions can stimulate interpersonal communication (Sohn and Sohn, 1982-83). This interpersonal attention may indirectly translate leaders' and media's agendas and issue definitions to individuals. Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller go so far as to suggest that "to the extent that citizens are integrated into everyday networks of social interaction, as measured by reports of political conversation with others, the effects of specific media content and real-world context disappear" (p. 45).

INFORMATION FLOW FROM MEDIA AND LEADERS

One assumption in this paper is that it is not necessarily enough to measure direct exposure to media or to community leaders. Information from these sources may diffuse within a community by means other than direct exposure. People may talk about their concerns with others, for instance, when issues involve conflict. Conflict draws attention to issues and stimulates information flow throughout a community (Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, 1980). Some research indicates that the greater the conflict, the greater the likelihood that members of a community will define issues similarly to leaders' definitions (Olien, Tichenor, and Donohue, 1982). However, conflict often derives from differences in definitions of issues, and it is frequently kept alive by these differences.

One indicator of conflict is a high level of attention to issues by either the media or community leaders, or both. Therefore, two variables examined in this paper are amount of issue coverage by media and amount of organized activity on issues.

The study described is on the neighborhood level, and it assumes that neighborhood newspapers and neighborhood leaders are among the most impor-

tant influences on neighborhood residents' issue agendas and definitions of issues. Neighborhood newspapers give neighborhood issues much more attention and consistent coverage than other media do (Ward and Gaziano, 1976, 1978; Gaziano and Ward, 1978). The study also examines neighborhood newspapers' and leaders' influences on potential divisions of the neighborhood along socioeconomic lines.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

A random sample of 239 residents of a low income, urban neighborhood in Minneapolis was interviewed by telephone in March 1980. The research population was all telephone households in the neighborhood, a household being a single residential listing in a street address telephone directory.³ The city planning department provided a detailed map of the neighborhood. Each block was numbered, excluding totally non-residential blocks, and 58 of the 153 residential blocks were selected by a random method without replacement. Households were selected randomly within blocks.

Interviewing with unlimited call-backs took three and a half weeks. A letter explaining the study and requesting cooperation preceded interviewing. Interviews lasted 15 minutes to an hour and were completed among 68 percent of contacts with eligible members of the sample.⁴

In addition, a purposive sample of 52 leaders of neighborhood organizations which had an interest in one or more of four issues in particular was interviewed in May and June 1980. Leaders also answered the same questions as neighborhood residents. These groups included residents' associations, American Indian organizations,⁵ schools, churches, social service organizations, senior citizens' groups, tenants' unions, and business associations, among others. All but six of these interviews were in person (five were by

phone and one by mail). Fifty-eight percent of the leaders did not reside in the neighborhood, although all of them either were employed in the neighborhood or were involved in organizations concerned with the neighborhood, or both.

Although it was possible for leaders who lived in the neighborhood to be selected into the residents' sample, this did not occur.

Agenda Questions

Both the residents' and leaders' samples were asked first, "What do you think are the most important problems or issues in the Phillips neighborhood?" They were then asked, "Which of these issues would you say is the most important to the neighborhood?" This line of questioning continued until all issues named were ranked. However, it was decided that the best way to analyze relative emphasis of issues in the neighborhood was to take into account all mentions of an issue, whether named first, second, or third. The issue mentioned by the largest proportion of respondents was considered to be ranked as first, and the issue mentioned by the next largest proportion was second, and so forth. (Inter-coder reliability coefficients were .93 for the residents' sample and .92 for the leaders' sample, which included calculations for 30 open-ended questions in addition to closed-ended questions.)⁶

Both samples also were asked about four neighborhood issues in particular (housing, crime, quality of schools, and economic development).⁷ These issues were chosen because they were of interest to lower socioeconomic individuals, as well as others, and because they varied in levels of organized activity and neighborhood newspaper coverage.

Level of organized group activity was defined by the number of mentions by neighborhood residents of groups interested in issues. Crime

received 117 mentions; housing, 102; economic development, 41; and schools, 28. Level of neighborhood press attention to issues was measured by the total number of items mentioning each topic (either as a dominant subject or a subordinate subject) published in each paper, as well as the total number of column inches devoted to each topic. Housing had the greatest coverage by far, then economic development, schools, and crime.⁸

Respondents answered a series of open-ended questions about their awareness of these issues, organized groups linked to them, perceived causes and solutions, as well as their participation in groups interested in the issues, personal experience, and interest. Questions were open-ended because it was considered desirable to allow respondents to define issues in their own terms.⁹

Respondents' answers to the four knowledge questions for each issue were considered to be definitions of the issues. Definition categories were: 1) general aspects, 2) groups involved in the issues, 3) causes of the issues, and 4) solutions. These definitions were compared with definitions of the issues in the neighborhood newspapers (which were coded according to the same criteria as responses were) and with those of the organization leaders. The percentages of residents (by education) and leaders emphasizing each definition category are shown in the appendix, which also gives the number of neighborhood newspaper stories or items in each category.

Respondents with less than a high school education were designated the "low education group," those with high school degrees were called the "medium education group," and those with some college or more called the "high education group." Three education groups were used in order to see if there were differences between those not finishing high school and those who did, since other research has shown that the least educated are most affected

by inequalities in information access and characteristics related to ability to acquire knowledge. It may be that similarities are greater between people with high school degrees and people who have attended college than between those who have not finished high school and those with high school diplomas (Gaziano, 1983-b, 1983-c).

Neighborhood Newspapers

The neighborhood has a non-profit newspaper, The Alley, begun in 1976, which had a circulation of 10,000 at the time of interviewing. Residents could obtain free copies at local businesses, the branch library, and other institutions. (After the study ended, this paper initiated door-to-door distribution as well.) Advertising is its main source of revenue.

A second paper, Southside News, was mailed to about 42,000 households in nine neighborhoods, including Phillips. It evolved from a Model Cities paper begun in 1971 to an independent non-profit newspaper financed by advertising, federal subsidy, and foundation grants. It went out of business in fall 1980, after the study ended, because of lack of funds. It contained an additional separate publication under the same management as an insert, Community Times. Although Southside News/Community Times was semi-monthly, residents received one free issue a month and the second issue only if they paid a subscription fee.

These two newspapers (including Community Times) were content-analyzed for a three-and-a-half-month period before interviewing began. Each story or item in the newspapers was coded for dominant theme. (The coefficient of inter-coder reliability was .91.)

The number of items for each dominant theme determined the agenda ranking, with the theme with the most items ranked as "1," the theme with the next highest number of items ranked as "2," and so forth.

Residents with low education (less than a high school degree) were more likely to read either of these newspapers than were more educated respondents (Gaziano, 1984).¹⁰ Although newspaper readership is usually correlated with education (Wade and Schramm, 1969; Bogart, 1981), it is not unusual to find that readership of community newspapers is not related to education (e.g., see Cobbey, 1980, and Tichenor and Wackman, 1973).

FINDINGS

Issues of Concern to the Neighborhood

Issues of greatest concern to the neighborhood as a whole were crime (30%), housing (28%), physical appearance of the neighborhood (13%), economic development (10%), and chemical dependency of many residents (10%), as shown in Table 1, which includes fifteen issues.

The order of emphasis by neighborhood residents varied, however, by education. The least educated were concerned primarily with crime, neighborhood appearance, housing, and lack of supervision of children (in this order). The moderate education group especially stressed crime, housing, neighborhood appearance, and chemical dependency. The most educated were particularly interested in crime, housing, economic development, chemical dependency, neighborhood image, physical appearance, lack of supervision of children, and quality of schools.

The agenda of the leaders as a group correlated most highly with the agenda of the most educated (Spearman's $\rho = .75$, $p \leq .01$), shown in Table 1. The considerable majority (83%) of the leaders had attended college, and most of the others had high school diplomas. In comparison, the correlation of the leaders' agenda was $r = .54$ ($p \leq .05$) with the moderately educated and $r = .39$ (n.s.) with the least educated. (The

correlation of the low education group's agenda with that of the moderate group was $r = .48$ ($p \leq .05$), and it was $r = .56$ ($p \leq .01$) with the high education group. The correlation of the medium and high education groups' agendas was $r = .70$ ($p \leq .01$).

The neighborhood newspapers' agendas were highly correlated (.96, $p \leq .01$) but only somewhat related to the leaders' list of issues (.25, .26, n.s.). The neighborhood newspapers' agendas were essentially unlike any of the education groups' rosters of issues, ranging from -.10 to .13 (all n.s.)

Definitions of the Issues

Besides differences in emphases of the total list of issues, differences in emphases in detailed information about four issues in particular were examined. These four issues were housing, crime, economic development, and quality of schools. These issues varied in amount of total neighborhood newspaper coverage and amount of organized group activity:

Amount of Organized Group Activity			
		High	Low
Amount of Neighborhood Newspaper Coverage	High to Moderate	Housing Issue	Economic Development Issue
	Low	Crime Issue	Schools Issue

Relationships will be discussed in the following order: 1) among the three education groups, 2) among the education groups and the leaders, 3) among the education groups and the papers, 4) between the papers, and 5) among the leaders and the papers.

1) Education Groups: The intercorrelations of issue definitions among all three education groups were very high (.68 or better) for general

knowledge of the housing issue, which attracted high attention from both local groups and neighborhood newspapers (Table 2). Intercorrelations for the three education groups were also very high (.95 or better) for economic development, which received high attention from the papers but low activity from groups. The intercorrelations were quite high as well for crime, which had low paper coverage but high group activity. The school issue, for which education group intercorrelations were lower (.17 to .37), was low both in amount of neighborhood paper coverage of the topic and amount of organized group activity on it.

These observations generally were true as well for awareness of groups active on the issues (Table 3). Intercorrelations were generally high for definitions of causes of all four issues, with a couple of exceptions (Table 4). The three education groups were in high agreement about definitions of solutions of the housing and economic development issues (which got high neighborhood press coverage). The high and medium education groups also had high agreement on solutions for crime and schools. The high and medium education groups were in either lower or no agreement with the least educated about solutions of the other two issues, which got low coverage (Table 5).

2) Education Groups and Leaders: Leaders' definitions of general knowledge correlated highly with all three education groups for the two issues on which groups were most active, housing and crime (Table 2). The leaders' definitions were more in line with those of the least educated for economic development, and more like that of the most educated in the case of the school issue.

Leaders and all the education groups were quite similar in their awareness of groups active on issues for the two issues receiving the most neighborhood newspaper attention, housing and economic development (Table 3).

Leaders were highly similar to the most educated in information about groups for the other two issues. They were especially divergent from the medium and low education groups on the schools issue.

The pattern of definitions of issue causes was quite similar to that for awareness of groups (Table 4).

In the case of definitions of issue solutions, leaders were more attuned to the more educated but much less so to the least educated for housing, economic development, and crime (Table 5). Only schools was an exception. Leaders and the least educated were most alike for that issue.

3) Education Groups and Papers: Both neighborhood papers were most oriented to the least educated with respect to general aspects of economic development and schools, both of which were low group activity issues (tables 2-5). (In several instances the crime and school issues did not receive enough neighborhood press coverage for variations in definitions of causes, solutions, and active groups to be evaluated.)

4) Neighborhood Papers: The two papers tended to be similar in emphasis of general aspects of all four issues, as well as to be similar in emphasis on groups interested in the housing issue (Table 6). However, they were quite dissimilar in their treatment of information about groups interested in economic development. They were also dissimilar with respect to causes and solutions of the housing and economic development topics. (Neither paper covered crime and schools enough to permit comparisons of definitions of causes and solutions.)

5) Leaders and Papers: The group of leaders and the neighborhood papers were most attuned to each other's definitions of issues, overall, in the case of economic development and crime, issues which received moderate levels of public attention (when both press coverage and groups are considered together). In the case of housing, which attracted high levels

of both newspaper and group interest, leaders and the papers were relatively similar for information about groups and solutions, but they were relatively dissimilar for information about general aspects and causes. They were much less similar, overall, for all types of information emphases about the school issue, which was low in both newspaper attention and group activity.

Southside News was attuned to all three education groups for housing solutions, but more attuned to the less educated for economic development solutions. Otherwise, the neighborhood papers were not particularly like any of the education groups in their areas of emphasis.

Characteristics Related to Having Issues in Agendas

Level of education was related to perceptions of issues and issue characteristics given prominence. The greater the level of neighborhood resident's education, the greater the number of issues named in agendas (Table 7). Only 13% of those who had attended college mentioned no issues, as contrasted with 23% of the high school educated and 33% of the least educated. The most educated also tended to name the greatest number of issues. Twenty-six percent listed three to five issues, compared with 23% of the medium education group and 10% of the low education group.

Study of several other variables suggests that agenda variations are related to variations in interest in the issues, personal experience with them, and participation in organized groups, all of which are related to variations in education levels (Table 8).

Housing: The low education group had less involvement with organizations concerned with the housing issue, lower interest in that issue, less reported personal experience with housing, and less likelihood of naming housing in issue agendas. The moderately educated had comparatively less involvement with housing interest groups than the most educated did; other-

wise, these two education groups tended to be fairly similar in their interest levels, amount of personal experience, and importance attached to the issue as measured by presence of the issue in agendas.

Crime: The least educated demonstrated high awareness of the crime issue, but this was proportionately less than that of the other groups. On the whole, the middle and high education groups had fairly similar levels of interest, experience, involvement with concerned groups, and importance attached to the crime issue. The least educated had somewhat lower levels of all these characteristics.

Economic Development: Reported participation in organizations oriented toward this issue was fairly low and at relatively similar levels among all three education groups. All three reported fairly low levels of experience and presence of the issue in agendas, although the college group tended to report slightly higher amounts of interest, experience, and importance attached to this issue.

Schools: The most educated tended to have more personal experience with the school topic, to have more involvement with groups concerned with education, and to accord the issue more importance. These characteristics illustrate the type of access to information that accompanies higher levels of education, and therefore might be expected to contribute to higher levels of knowledge among the most educated. Knowledge differences occurred in spite of the fact that the low and high segments cited about equal amounts of interest in the issue (the moderately educated displayed less interest).

Those who tended to include any of the four issues in their agendas of neighborhood issues had high readership of the neighborhood and metropolitan newspapers and relatively lower use of television and radio, although a majority attended to broadcast media (data not shown). (Other variables,

such as length of residence in the neighborhood, age, sex, and attachment to the neighborhood were not related to presence of issues in agendas.)

CONCLUSIONS

The Role of Knowledge, Interest, Experience, and Group Involvement

Because the patterns of variation in awareness knowledge, interest, personal experience, involvement in interest groups, and agendas all tend to be relatively similar, it may be that interest, knowledge, and perceptions of issue importance develop out of personal experience and involvement with organizations interested in the issues, which in turn may be enhanced by having high education. Mass media use and personal contacts may enhance knowledge and interest, but it is unclear whether media use and interpersonal contacts may be more important than experience and interest group involvement in major contributions to knowledge, interest, and perceptions of issue importance. However, the best predictors of depth knowledge of these four issues were experience, interest, involvement in groups concerned with the issue, and education (Gaziano, 1983-b, 1983-c). These variables were much more important than any media use variables in explaining variations in depth knowledge.

Another observation is that the least educated may have had more personal experience with the housing problem than reported, if the leaders are correct in their perceptions about this, but the less educated may be less likely than other education groups to perceive housing, crime, etc., as issues. They may take them for granted as part of life which they cannot control. Ability to respond fully to the open-ended questions may depend on well-developed cognitive skills. This may also help to account for the lower incidence of these issues in agendas of the least educated.

Definitions of Issues

When correlations of leaders' and neighborhood newspapers' agendas and issue definitions are contrasted, it is clear that the leaders' definitions and agendas corresponded more highly with those of the neighborhood residents, overall, than with those of the neighborhood papers.

When definitions of the four issues were examined in detail, the relative emphases by the neighborhood press bore comparatively much less relationship to the emphases by neighborhood residents. This is not to say that the neighborhood press did not influence readers, only that they did not incorporate the relative emphases into the information in their heads. The newspapers' definitions of the issues were more similar to those of the least educated for issues receiving a moderate amount of press and group attention, as opposed to either a very high or very low level of public attention ("public attention" refers to both neighborhood paper coverage and group activity taken together).

In general, the organization leaders, who tended to be well educated, were more oriented to the most educated people in the neighborhood, especially with regard to issue definitions about groups, causes, and solutions. This kind of information was not well covered by the neighborhood press for any of the issues except for housing. The influence of the leaders on issue definitions was greatest when issues received low public attention; their influence was least when issues received a great deal of public attention.

The three education groups were most similar in defining issues when both the neighborhood press and organizations gave an issue a high level of attention. They were particularly dissimilar when an issue got little public consideration.

On the other hand, the leaders and the press were most similar in issue definitions when issues attracted a moderate level of public interest. They showed the most dissimilarity when an issue had either low public interest or very high public interest.

These observations suggest that organization leaders are far more influential in defining issues than the neighborhood press, and that leaders may exert the most influence when public attention to issues and knowledge about them are low. The neighborhood press may play a role of knowledge reinforcement more than of agenda setting with regard to issue definition. (It is not possible to draw conclusions about influence of other media since they were not content-analyzed).

On the neighborhood level, in this study, the process of the two-step flow appears to be operative, but the direction of the flow appears to be from the leaders to the neighborhood media (rather than from media to leaders) and then to the neighborhood residents. Further, the leaders, who tended to be well educated, were most in agreement with issue definitions and emphases of the most educated people in the neighborhood. This helps to show how "agenda gaps" and knowledge gaps occur.

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NOTES

1. The original knowledge gap hypothesis, offered by Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien (1970:159-160), states:

As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease.

2. Weaver (1982) has pointed out that a body of research suggests that personal experience with issues is more powerful in determining their importance than media are. However, Einsiedel, Salomone, and Schneider (1984) found that media exposure was a better predictor of salience and concern with crime in their sample than personal experience was.

3. Carter (1982) described the problem of a household's having more than one phone number. Since the street address directory showed all numbers for each household, it was possible to check for this problem. None of the households selected had more than one phone number.

4. Eight-seven percent were white, 10% were minorities, and race was unknown for 3%. The sample over-represented Caucasians and the better educated. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is $\pm .06$.

5. No organizations representing any other minority groups were found in the neighborhood.

6. See Gaziano (1983-b, 1984) for more details on methodology.

7. The knowledge questions followed this format and included questions about group participation, personal experience, and interest:

"Now I'd like to ask something about the housing problem. Have you seen or heard anything about it in the Phillips neighborhood?" (Probes.)

"Do you know of any people or organizations that have been trying to do something about this problem?" (Probes.)

"Do you belong to, or attend any meetings of any groups or organizations which are interested in the housing issue?" (Probes.)

"Have you had any personal experience with the housing issue, such as writing or phoning people about it or knowing people who have had trouble with this problem?" (Probes.)

"What, in your opinion, is the cause of the housing problem in this neighborhood?" (Probes.)

"Do you know of any ways to do something about the housing problem around here?" (Probes.)

(continued on next page)

"How interested would you say that you are in the housing problem? Would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested, or not interested?"

8. For more details about these measures, see Gaziano (1983-b, 1984).

9. Details about neighborhood residents' knowledge of these questions relevant to the "knowledge gap" literature are described by Gaziano (1983-c, 1984).

10. About 57% of neighborhood residents reported reading both The Alley and Southside News. Overall, six in ten read the Alley, and more than seven in ten read Southside News.

Among the low education group, 69% read both papers. Forty-eight percent of the medium education group read both, and 52% of the high education group reported reading both.

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TABLE 1. NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES AND AGENDAS

A. Issues of Concern to the Neighborhood

	% Mentioning Issue
Crime	39.7 ^a
Housing	28.0
Neighborhood Appearance	13.4
Economic Development	10.0
Chemical Dependency	9.6
Image of Neighborhood	7.5
Unsupervised Children	6.7
Amount of traffic	5.0
Quality of Schools	5.0
Problems of Minorities	4.6
Too many bars	2.5
Dogs Running Loose	2.1
Too much noise	2.1
Problems of Elderly	2.1
Lack of Recreation Facilities	2.1

B. Correlations of Agendas of Residents, Neighborhood Newspapers, and Leaders

	Leaders	The Alley	Southside News
Low Education Respondents	.39	-.10	-.07
Medium Education Respondents	.54*	.02	.07
High Education Respondents	.75**	.03	.13
Community Leaders		.25	.26
The Alley			.96**
	Low Education Respondents	Medium Education Respondents	
Low Education Respondents			
Medium Education Respondents	.48*		
High Education Respondents	.56**	.70**	

^a Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could name as many issues as they wished. N = 239.

* $P \leq .05$.

** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 2. CORRELATIONS: AWARENESS OF GENERAL ASPECTS OF ISSUES

	Housing Issue			Economic Development Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.90**			.95**		
High Education	.68**	.83**		.95**	1.00**	
Organization Leaders	.80**	.90**	.78**	.65**	.40	.40
The Alley	.18	-.13	-.55	.65**	.40*	.40*
Southside	-.08	-.33	-.70	.55**	.35	.35

	Crime Issue			School Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.88**			.37		
High Education	.65**	.66**		.37	.17	
Organization Leaders	.83**	.79**	.90**	.16	.51*	.81**
The Alley	-.52	-.48	-.60	.56**	.30	.04
Southside	-.68	-.60	-.71	.74**	.60**	.34

* $P \leq .05$.** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 3. CORRELATIONS: AWARENESS OF GROUPS ACTIVE ON ISSUES

	Housing Issue			Economic Development Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.67**			.58*		
High Education	.83*	.90**		.65**	.43	
Organization Leaders	.61*	.97**	.79**	.58*	.70**	.88**
The Alley	.31	.64**	.43*	.95**	.83**	.60**
Southside	.20	.37	.29	.13	-.40	-.13

	Crime Issue			School Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.59*			.36		
High Education	.51*	.53*		.56*	.14	
Organization Leaders	.21	.60*	.86**	.10	.03	.89**
The Alley	--a	--	--	--a	--	--
Southside	--	--	--	--	--	--

a Not enough neighborhood newspaper coverage to compute.

* $P \leq .05$.

** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 4. CORRELATIONS: AWARENESS OF ISSUE CAUSES

	Housing Issue			Economic Development Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.96**			.59*		
High Education	.93**	.99**		.56*	.26	
Organization Leaders	.71**	.81**	.93**	.66*	.36	.59*
The Alley	.37	.04	.17	—*	—	—
Southside	.41*	.36	.43*	.43*	.36	-.04
	Crime Issue			School Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.54*			.95**		
High Education	.14	.71**		.80**	.75**	
Organization Leaders	.00	.60*	.75**	.40	.35	.80**
The Alley	— ^a	—	—	— ^a	—	—
Southside	—	—	—	—	—	—

^a Not enough newspaper coverage to compute.

* $P \leq .05$.

** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 5. CORRELATIONS: AWARENESS OF ISSUE SOLUTIONS

	Housing Issue			Economic Development Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.84**			.88**		
High Education	.80**	.48*		.50*	.88**	
Organization Leaders	.25	.58*	.90**	.50*	.88**	1.00**
The Alley	.39*	.27	.47*	-.63	-.13	.13
Southside	.60**	.33	.83**	1.00**	.88**	.50*
	Crime Issue			School Issue		
	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Low Education						
Medium Education	.30			-.13		
High Education	.30	.86**		-.63	.88**	
Organization Leaders	.13	.86**	.87**	.88**	.13	-.50
The Alley	--a	--	--	--a	--	--
Southside	--	--	--	--	--	--

a Not enough newspaper coverage to compute.

* $P \leq .05$.

** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 6. CORRELATIONS: NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPERS' AND LEADERS' AGENDAS

	Housing: General Aspects		Housing: Awareness of Groups	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	-.13		.70**	
Southside News	-.18	.93**	.37	.86**
	Housing: Awareness of Causes		Housing: Awareness of Solutions	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	.11		.41*	
Southside News	.27	-.20	.49*	.41*
	Economic Development: Awareness of General Aspects		Economic Development: Awareness of Groups	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	1.00**		.68**	
Southside News	.95**	.95**	-.50	-.13
	Economic Development: Awareness of Causes		Economic Development: Awareness of Solutions	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	.54*		.13	
Southside News	.20	.11	.50	-.63

* $P \leq .05$.** $P \leq .01$.

Table 6, continued

	Crime: General Aspects		Crime: Awareness of Groups	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	.58**		--a	
Southside News	.70**	.73**	--	--
	Crime: Awareness of Causes		Crime: Awareness of Solutions	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	--a		--a	
Southside News	--	--	--	--
	Schools: General Aspects		Schools: Awareness of Groups	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	-.13		.84	
Southside News	-.18	.93**	.20	.28
	Schools: Awareness of Causes		Schools: Awareness of Solutions	
	Leaders	The Alley	Leaders	The Alley
The Alley	--a		--a	
Southside News	--	--	--	--

a Not enough newspaper coverage to compute.

** $P \leq .01$.

TABLE 7. NUMBER OF ISSUES IN AGENDAS BY EDUCATION

Education	Number of Items in Agendas		
	0	1-2	3-5
LOW (Less than High School) (N=48)	33.3% (N=16)	56.3% (N=27)	10.4% (N=5)
MEDIUM (High School Graduate) (N=60)	23.3% (N=14)	53.3% (N=32)	23.3% (N=14)
HIGH (Some College or More) (N=122)	13.1% (N=16)	60.7% (N=74)	26.2% (N=32)

TABLE 8. ISSUE AWARENESS, INTEREST, EXPERIENCE, GROUP INVOLVEMENT, AND AGENDAS^a

Level of Education	Are Aware of Issue	Are Interested in Issue ^b	Have Personal Experience	Are Involved in Groups Interested in Issue	Name Issues in Agenda
HOUSING					
Low	46% ^c	42%	13%	13%	10%
Medium	62	55	28	12	28
High	64	56	26	19	27
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Low	42	31	4	8	--
Medium	32	28	3	8	3
High	43	35	7	7	10
CRIME					
Low	73	71	60	17	25
Medium	82	78	77	22	45
High	89	84	72	25	42
SCHOOLS					
Low	33	33	10	8	--
Medium	30	27	13	3	2
High	42	34	16	12	7

a N = 230 with 9 observations missing.

b Responses combined for "very interested" and "somewhat interested."

c Percentages refer to proportion of education group with characteristic.

Low education group, N = 48; medium education group, N = 60; high education group, N = 122. NOTE: percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

APPENDIX: ISSUE CHARACTERISTICS DEFINED BY RESIDENTS' SAMPLE (BY EDUCATION)

I. HOUSING ISSUE

A. General Aspects

	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Problems related to landlords	29%*	26%	26%
Run-down neighborhood	31	35	30
Housing shortage, displacement of residents	10	5	12
Poverty and low incomes in neighborhood	5	9	14
Renovation and urban renewal	17	16	12
Other (excluded from calculations)	10	9	6

B. Groups

Government agencies or officials	—	14%	17%
Citizens' groups, including PNIA**	50	43	40
American Indian groups	—	7	2
Business associations	—	—	—
Social service organizations	17	—	3
Minnesota Tenants Union	33	29	22
Other (excluded from calculations)	—	7	17

C. Causes

Low incomes of residents	39%	39%	42%
Landlord-tenant relations	30	28	24
Economy, inflation	4	5	3
Housing deterioration	9	18	11
"Regentrification," displacement	13	5	9
Authorities don't care about neighborhood	—	—	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	4	5	7

D. Solutions

Improve business, economic development	—	18%	18%
Regulation or incentives for landlords	82	25	22
Work together, develop neighborhood pride	—	14	1
Renovate housing, develop programs for this	18	18	25
Renter incentives to maintain property, learn about renters' rights	—	11	21
Other (excluded from calculations)	—	14	13

*Percentages refer to proportion of total responses for each education group, not number of cases. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

**PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.

Issue Characteristics Defined by Residents' Sample (by Education)

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. General Aspects	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Crime, vandalism drive out/harm businesses	21%*	31%	19%
Disputes about businesses' expansion; certain kinds of businesses are a problem	21	21	17
New businesses, development in neighborhood	54	38	47
Need for more/better selection of stores	--	--	8
Other (excluded from calculations)	4	10	9
B. Groups			
American Indian organizations	20%	11%	26%
Business associations	30	44	10
Merchants, individual businesses	--	11	3
Citizens' groups, including PNIA**	30	11	16
City council, government officials	10	--	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	10	22	42
C. Causes			
Neighborhood is declining	--	15%	5%
People want to revitalize neighborhood	21	15	13
Business conditions are poor	21	15	13
Bars, liquor stores, porno shops, adult theaters attract undesirable people	7	--	2
Need more businesses to provide jobs, to keep money in neighborhood, etc.	21	38	27
Fear of increased traffic, increased prices and rents if neighborhood is revitalized	14	--	38
Other (excluded from calculations)	14	15	2
D. Solutions			
Bring in new businesses, provide help for existing businesses	--	--	29%
Clean up, remodel, fight apathy	75	75	51
More local ownership/control of local businesses, hire residents	25	--	11
Other (excluded from calculations)	--	25	9

*Percentages refer to proportion of total responses for each education group, not number of cases. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

**PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.

Issue Characteristics Defined by Residents' Sample (by Education)

III. CRIME

A. General Aspects	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Violent crimes against people	5%*	10%	12%
Crimes against property; theft	64	64	56
Fear for safety; high crime rate	15	6	25
Chemical abuse is linked to crime	2	—	7
Young people are responsible for crime	6	7	4
Police are ineffective, don't respond	2	3	5
Police are effective, do good job	3	3	—
Crime rate is more minor than most think	—	—	2
Other (excluded from calculations)	5	5	3
B. Groups			
Crime prevention division of police department	—	21%	15%
Block clubs	71	53	56
Crime victims program	—	3	4
Women Against Violence Against Women, etc.	6	6	4
PNIA (neighborhood residents' association)	—	3	6
Elected officials	—	9	—
Other (excluded from calculations)	18	6	14
C. Causes			
Unemployment, need for jobs, the economy	9%	23%	29%
Use of drugs, alcohol	15	11	11
Lack of supervision of young people, lack of recreation facilities for them	30	27	18
Frustration, low self-esteem, poor treatment	17	11	14
Lack of neighborhood identity, transiency	4	6	13
Racial conflict, other racial problems	11	11	5
Authorities are too lenient, don't care	11	6	5
Carelessness of victims	—	—	2
Other (excluded from calculations)	4	6	6
D. Solutions			
Need for job training, more businesses	6%	3%	11%
Get interested in neighborhood, join block clubs, form groups	—	32	23
Establish recreation centers, etc.	6	8	11
More/better police patrolling, more responsive police, have police who are minorities	53	18	22
Take responsibility, buy locks, etc.	12	32	14
Provide more information, education	—	3	4
Other (excluded from calculations)	24	6	15

*Percentages refer to proportion of total responses for each education group. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Issue Characteristics Defined by Residents' Sample (by Education)

IV. SCHOOLS

A. General Aspects	Low Ed.	Med. Ed.	High Ed.
Schools, teachers are doing good job	82*	7%	8%
Violence, behavior problems, lack of discipline in schools	64	54	44
Drop-outs, transiency, lack of parents' or kids' interest, etc.	8	—	17
Teachers can't relate to inner-city students, don't care, do poor job	4	18	12
Busing, desegregation, enrollment control	4	4	12
Problems affecting minority groups	8	7	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	4	11	3
B. Groups			
Parents, parents' associations	22%	25%	32%
School personnel	11	25	11
American Indian groups	11	—	16
Alternative schools	—	25	5
Citizens' committee, PNIA**	—	—	16
Churches, social service agencies	11	5	5
Other (excluded from calculations)	44	25	16
C. Causes			
Schools are too lenient, lack of rapport with parents, minorities, etc.	20%	10%	23%
Need for more alternative schools, school closings are problem, lack of funds	20	—	16
Minority groups, undesirables are to blame, people in poverty are apathetic	33	67	43
Teachers fear kids, need more authority	20	10	5
Other (excluded from calculations)	7	14	13
D. Solutions			
More emphasis on basic skills, tutoring programs, teachers who live in neighborhood	60%	10%	6%
Better funding, higher salaries, smaller classes, stop school closings	20	10	19
Better communication between schools and community, more parental involvement	20	50	39
Other (excluded from calculations)	—	30	35

*Percentages refer to proportion of total responses for each education group. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

**PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.

ISSUE CHARACTERISTICS DEFINED BY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPERS AND LEADERS

I. HOUSING ISSUE

A. General Aspects

	The Alley	Southside	Leaders
	Number of Stories	Number of Stories	Percentage of Responses
Problems related to landlords	7	2	27%
Run-down neighborhood	7	0	24
Housing shortage, displacement of residents	13	4	10
Poverty and low incomes in neighborhood	5	0	10
Renovation and urban renewal	21	10	13
Other (excluded from calculations)	16	5	16

B. Groups

Government agencies or officials	3	1	8%
Citizens' groups, including PNIA*	13	1	53
American Indian groups	18	4	8
Business associations	0	0	6
Social service organizations	1	1	4
Minnesota Tenants Union	6	1	13
Other (excluded from calculations)	29	21	8

C. Causes

Low incomes of residents	5	0	30%
Landlord-tenant relations	2	2	25
Economy, inflation	2	0	4
Housing deterioration	0	1	15
"Regentrification," displacement	5	1	7
Authorities don't care about neighborhood	3	0	8
Other (excluded from calculations)	2	1	11

D. Solutions

Improve business, economic development	2	1	22%
Regulation or incentives for landlords	1	2	16
Work together, develop neighborhood pride	4	0	12
Renovate housing, develop programs for this	5	3	21
Renter incentives to maintain property, learn about renters' rights	2	5	14
Other (excluded from calculations)	7	3	15

*PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.

Issue Characteristics Defined by Neighborhood Newspapers and Leaders

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Alley Southside Leaders

A. General Aspects	Number of Stories	Number of Stories	Percentage of Responses
Crime, vandalism drive out/harm businesses	0	0	8%
Disputes about businesses' expansion; certain kinds of businesses are a problem	3	1	13
New businesses, development in neighborhood	8	7	66
Need for more/better selection of stores	1	1	10
Other (excluded from calculations)	3	4	3
B. Groups			
American Indian organizations	4	2	27%
Business associations	6	2	25
Merchants, individual businesses	1	2	11
Citizens' groups, including PNIA*	5	3	20
City council, government officials	1	4	5
Other (excluded from calculations)	2	4	11
C. Causes			
Neighborhood is declining	0	0	3%
People want to revitalize neighborhood	1	0	16
Business conditions are poor	0	1	5
Bars, liquor stores, porno shops, adult theaters attract undesirable people	0	1	6
Need more businesses to provide jobs, to keep money in neighborhood, etc.	0	1	47
Fear of increased traffic, increased prices and rents if neighborhood is revitalized	0	0	10
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	0	13
D. Solutions			
Bring in new businesses, provide help for existing businesses	5	1	34%
Clean up, remodel, fight apathy	2	3	43
More local ownership/control of local businesses, hire residents	2	2	11
Other (excluded from calculations)	1	0	11

*PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.

Issue Characteristics Defined by Neighborhood Newspapers and Leaders

III. CRIME

A. General Aspects	Number of Stories	Number of Stories	Percentage of Responses
Violent crimes against people	1	2	13%
Crimes against property; theft	0	2	44
Fear for safety; high crime rate	2	2	15
Chemical abuse is linked to crime	0	1	6
Young people are responsible for crime	0	0	6
Police are ineffective, don't respond	0	0	4
Police are effective, do good job	0	1	0
Crime rate is more minor than most think	0	0	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	1	8
B. Groups			
Crime prevention division of police department	0	0	28%
Block clubs	0	1	28
Crime victims program	0	0	3
Women Against Violence Against Women, etc.	1	0	2
PNIA (neighborhood residents' association)	0	1	12
Elected officials	1	2	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	1	1	23
C. Causes			
Unemployment, need for jobs, the economy	0	0	29%
Use of drugs, alcohol	0	0	25
Lack of supervision of young people, lack of recreation facilities for them	0	0	15
Frustration, low self-esteem, poor treatment	0	0	9
Lack of neighborhood identity, transiency	0	0	12
Racial conflict, other racial problems	0	0	2
Authorities are too lenient, don't care	0	0	2
Carelessness of victims	0	0	2
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	0	4
D. Solutions			
Need for job training, more businesses	0	0	5%
Get interested in neighborhood, join block clubs, form groups	0	0	22
Establish recreation centers, etc.	0	0	10
More/better police patrolling, more responsive police, have police who are minorities	0	0	19
Take responsibility, buy locks, etc.	0	0	14
Provide more information, education	0	0	10
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	0	21

Issue Characteristics Defined by Neighborhood Newspapers and Leaders

IV. SCHOOLS

The Alley Southside Leaders

A. General Aspects	Number of Stories	Number of Stories	Percentage of Responses
Schools, teachers are doing good job	4	1	8%
Violence, behavior problems, lack of discipline in schools	0	1	21
Drop-outs, transiency, lack of parents' or kids' interest, etc.	0	0	14
Teachers can't relate to inner-city students, don't care, do poor job	0	0	16
Busing, desegregation, enrollment control	0	0	14
Problems affecting minority groups	0	0	11
Other (excluded from calculations)	4	6	14
B. Groups			
Parents, parents' associations	2	0	18%
School personnel	0	2	10
American Indian groups	0	0	16
Alternative schools	0	0	8
Citizens' committee, PNIA*	2	0	26
Churches, social service agencies	0	0	3
Other (excluded from calculations)	6	2	20
C. Causes			
Schools are too lenient, lack of rapport with parents, minorities, etc.	0	0	36%
Need for more alternative schools, school closings are problem, lack of funds	0	0	12
Minority groups, undesirables are to blame, people in poverty are apathetic	0	0	28
Teachers fear kids, need more authority	0	0	6
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	0	18
D. Solutions			
More emphasis on basic skills, tutoring programs, teachers who live in neighborhood	0	0	29%
Better funding, higher salaries, smaller classes, stop school closings	0	0	20
Better communication between schools and community, more parental involvement	0	0	24
Other (excluded from calculations)	0	1	27

*PNIA is the neighborhood residents' association.